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AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE · FREE RESOURCE

Rhetorical Terms Master Glossary

A complete reference of the 150+ terms AP English Language and Composition expects you to recognize and, more importantly, apply. Use it three ways: look up a term you meet in a reading or a multiple-choice answer choice; study one group at a time (each group matches a unit of the course); and, before writing a rhetorical analysis essay, skim the "how it appears on the exam" column so you describe choices instead of just naming them.

How to Use This Glossary

The *AP English Language and Composition Course and Exam Description* (CED) is explicit that the exam rewards **applying** concepts like diction, syntax, and audience rather than memorizing labels. A multiple-choice question will almost never ask "Which device is this?" It will ask what a sentence *does*, why a writer placed a paragraph where she did, or what a word *connotes* in context. The free-response readers reward students who can describe a choice in plain English ("she opens with a story about her grandmother before turning to statistics") just as much as students who name it ("she moves from anecdote to data"). The Chief Reader Reports repeatedly flag essays that list devices without explaining their function, and essays that call "ethos" or "pathos" a choice rather than an *effect* of a choice.

So every entry below has four parts:

1. **Term** – with pronunciation help where the word is unusual.
2. **Definition** – short, in plain language.
3. **Example** – a quotation from a public domain text (pre-1929) that we are confident of, or an original sentence written for this glossary and marked "(original)."
4. **How it appears on the exam** – the stem patterns, answer-choice vocabulary, or essay moves where this term actually shows up.

Terms are grouped by the ten families below. Within each family they are arranged from the most foundational to the most specialized.

GROUP	WHAT IT COVERS	CED SKILLS MOST INVOLVED
1. The rhetorical situation	exigence, audience, purpose, context, message, persona	1.A, 1.B, 2.A, 2.B
2. The appeals	ethos, pathos, logos, kairos and their relatives	1.B, 7.A

GROUP	WHAT IT COVERS	CED SKILLS MOST INVOLVED
3. Claims, evidence, reasoning	thesis, claim types, evidence types, warrant, qualification, line of reasoning	3.A–3.C, 4.A–4.C, 5.A, 6.A
4. Organization and methods of development	narration, comparison, cause–effect, definition, transitions, unity, coherence	5.B, 5.C, 6.B, 6.C
5. Diction	denotation/connotation, register, concrete/abstract, jargon, euphemism	7.A, 8.A
6. Syntax	clauses, sentence types, periodic/cumulative, parallelism, punctuation for effect	7.B, 7.C, 8.B, 8.C
7. Figurative language, schemes, and tropes	metaphor, analogy, personification, anaphora, antithesis, chiasmus, and more	7.A, 8.A
8. Satire and irony	verbal/situational/dramatic irony, sarcasm, parody, understatement, hyperbole	7.A
9. Logical fallacies	22 fallacies that appear in MCQ reasoning items and in strong argument essays	3.A, 5.A
10. Genre and task vocabulary	speech, eulogy, op-ed, memoir, “qualify,” “extent to which,” orienting information	1.A, task directions

Group 1: The Rhetorical Situation

The rhetorical situation is the first Big Idea of the course (RHS-1): writers make strategic choices *because of* the situation they write in. Every FRQ 2 prompt gives you the situation in its orienting paragraph; every MCQ reading set gives it in an italicized note. Learn these terms first.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Rhetoric	The art of using language effectively to achieve a purpose with a particular audience; the study of how writers and speakers make choices.	Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address is 272 words long because the occasion called for brevity after a two-hour oration by Edward Everett.	Rarely a stem word itself; the whole exam is a test of rhetorical reading. Essays that call rhetoric “manipulation” misunderstand the course.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Rhetorical situation	The whole set of circumstances a text responds to: exigence, writer, audience, purpose, context, and message.	A commencement speech given to graduates in May 2016 by a poet who was also a professor at their university.	FRQ 2 bullet: "Demonstrate an understanding of the rhetorical situation." MCQ: "The passage is best understood as a response to which of the following situations?"
Exigence (EX-i-jence)	The problem, event, or need that prompts someone to write or speak now; the "why this, why now."	Florence Kelley spoke to a suffrage convention in 1905 because children were working night shifts in mills while women could not vote to stop it.	MCQ 1.A: "The writer's primary exigence is ..."; "The passage responds to ...". In FRQ 2, naming the exigence in your introduction counts toward understanding the situation.
Occasion	The specific time, place, and event of a text (a funeral, a press conference, an anniversary). Closely related to exigence and context.	Thatcher's 2004 eulogy for Reagan was delivered at a state funeral, which explains its restraint.	Orienting paragraphs always give the occasion. Chief Readers flag essays that analyze a speech "as if the audience were readers."
Speaker / writer	The person (or persona) who produces the text, including the credentials and identity that shape how the audience receives it.	Benjamin Banneker, a free Black almanac author, wrote to Thomas Jefferson in 1791; his identity is the heart of the letter's force.	MCQ: "The speaker characterizes herself as ..."; "The author's relation to the reader is best described as that of ...". FRQ: say "Kelley" or "the speaker," never "the author" for a speech.
Persona	The voice or role a writer adopts, which may differ from the writer's private self (the "mask").	Swift in "A Modest Proposal" adopts the persona of a reasonable economic planner.	MCQ: "The stance assumed by the speaker is most similar to ..." with choices like "a scholar weighing theories" or "an amused colleague."
Audience	The intended readers or listeners (primary), plus any secondary audiences who will also encounter the text.	Gandhi's 1930 letter was addressed to Lord Irwin but written to be read by the British and Indian public.	MCQ 1.B: "The writer's reference to X primarily serves to appeal to an audience that ...". Writing items: "The writer wants to address an audience of skeptical administrators."
Primary audience	The specific group the writer most directly addresses.	The graduates sitting in front of the commencement speaker.	Name it precisely in FRQ 2; "the audience" without a noun is a flagged weakness.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Secondary audience	Readers the writer knows will also read the text, even if not directly addressed.	Parents, faculty, and news reporters at the same commencement.	Sophistication point: explaining how a choice works on two audiences at once.
Purpose	What the writer wants the audience to think, feel, believe, or do.	Kennedy's 1962 press conference remarks aimed to shame steel executives and rally public opinion.	Always stated in FRQ 2 prompts ("to convey her message about bravery"). MCQ: "In the first paragraph, the writer's primary purpose is to ...".
Message	The central idea or claim the text communicates (what is said, as distinct from why it is said).	Albright's message to Mount Holyoke graduates: your generation must take responsibility for the world's unfinished business.	FRQ 2 task line: "analyzes the rhetorical choices X makes to convey her message." The thesis must connect choices to this message.
Context	The historical, cultural, and social circumstances surrounding the text.	A 1905 speech about child labor exists in a context of rapid industrialization and no federal labor laws.	Sophistication can be earned by situating a choice in context, but "sweeping generalizations as context" earns nothing.
Kairos (KY-ross)	The opportune moment; timeliness. A choice that works because of <i>when</i> it is made.	Lincoln's Second Inaugural, delivered as the Civil War was ending, could call for "malice toward none."	Rarely a stem word; useful in essays to explain why a writer chose a particular moment or reference.
Rhetorical choice	Any deliberate decision a writer makes (opening with an anecdote, repeating a phrase, shifting to the second person) to achieve a purpose.	Rita Dove structured her commencement address as a series of "wishes."	The core of FRQ 2 since 2019. Choices can be described without jargon; readers accept "she moves from personal anecdote to collective history."
Rhetorical device	A named technique (metaphor, anaphora, rhetorical question). A device is a <i>kind</i> of choice, but naming it is not analysis.	"Anaphora" labels Kelley's repeated "while we sleep."	Chief Readers warn that "devices are not choices" and that unsupported device labels hurt credibility. Name the device <i>and</i> say what it does.
Rhetorical triangle	The relationship among speaker, audience, and subject (sometimes with purpose at the center).	Any text can be mapped: who is speaking, to whom, about what.	A planning tool; not a stem word.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Argument vs. persuasion	Argument reasons toward a position with evidence; persuasion uses any means (including emotion and identity) to move an audience. The CED treats all FRQs as arguments.	A lab report argues; an advertisement persuades.	FRQ 3 is called the “argument” essay; the rubric rewards reasoning, not just conviction.
Stance	The writer’s position or attitude toward the subject and the audience.	Hamilton’s 1862 stance toward critics of women writers is defiant.	MCQ answer choices: “an informed commentator,” “a sympathetic ally,” “an aloof judge.”
Voice	The distinctive personality that comes through a writer’s diction, syntax, and tone.	Twain’s voice in “Advice to Youth” is mock-earnest.	Writing items: “maintain a formal, objective voice throughout.”
Call to action	A direct request that the audience do something.	Kelley closes by urging women to use whatever influence they have to end child labor.	Sometimes an answer choice for the function of a conclusion. Calling it a “device” without explaining what action and why is a weakness.

Group 2: The Appeals

The classical appeals describe *how a choice works on an audience*. The single most common mistake in rhetorical analysis essays is to write “the speaker uses pathos.” Pathos is not something a writer “uses”; it is an effect produced by a concrete choice (a story, an image, a word). Describe the choice, then name the appeal as its effect.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Ethos (EE-thoss)	Appeal to the speaker’s character, credibility, or authority; also the trustworthiness the text builds.	Banneker opens by acknowledging Jefferson’s reputation for benevolence, establishing his own courtesy before challenging him.	Never a stem word. In essays, write “establishes his credibility by ...” instead of “uses ethos.”
Pathos (PAY-thoss)	Appeal to the audience’s emotions, values, or imagination.	Kelley describes little girls “just tall enough to reach the bobbins.”	In essays, describe the image and say what feeling it produces and why that feeling serves the purpose.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Logos (LOH-goss)	Appeal to reason: evidence, logic, statistics, cause and effect.	Kennedy lists the dollar effects of a steel price increase on the national economy.	Writing items: "The writer wants to add evidence to support the claim in sentence 7."
Kairos	Appeal to timeliness (see Group 1).	Chavez wrote on the tenth anniversary of King's death.	Use in the "why now" portion of an essay introduction.
Credibility	The quality of being believable; built through expertise, fairness, shared values, and accurate evidence.	A scientist citing her own fieldwork.	MCQ on synthesis-style passages: which source is most credible, and why.
Authority	Credibility that comes from position or expertise.	The Surgeon General on smoking.	"Appeal to authority" is legitimate when the authority is relevant; see the fallacy in Group 9.
Appeal to shared values	Invoking beliefs the audience already holds to win agreement.	Lincoln's "a new nation, conceived in Liberty" appeals to founding ideals.	MCQ 1.B: "The writer addresses the audience's values most directly in which sentence?"
Identification	The sense that speaker and audience are alike or on the same side.	A millionaire president saying "we" and "our families" to working Americans.	A frequent sophistication observation: how the speaker closes the distance with the audience.
Common ground	Points of agreement a writer establishes before arguing.	"We all want our children safe" before arguing a specific policy.	Writing items on counterargument: "acknowledge the beliefs of readers who distrust technology."
Emotional appeal (legitimate vs. manipulative)	Emotion is legitimate when it fits the facts and the stakes; manipulative when it substitutes for them.	A eulogy's grief is fitting; a car ad's fear is not.	Argument essays can analyze this distinction; MCQ distractors sometimes call a fitting appeal "manipulative."
Anecdote	A brief, true story used as evidence or illustration (a choice that often produces pathos or ethos).	Saujani recounts losing her first congressional race.	Among the most common answer-choice nouns: "an extended anecdote," "a personal anecdote." Readers reward explaining <i>what the anecdote does</i> , not just that it exists.

Group 3: Claims, Evidence, and Reasoning

This group is the heart of Big Ideas 2 and 3 (CLE-1 and REO-1) and of the rubric's Row B. The words here are the words of the scoring guidelines themselves.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Claim	A statement that asserts something is true, good, or should be done, and that requires support.	"Schools should start later."	MCQ 3.A: "The writer uses the example of X primarily as evidence that ...".
Thesis	The overarching claim of an argument; in AP terms it must be <i>defensible</i> and respond to the prompt.	"Although napping has costs for employers, its cognitive benefits make it worth protecting in school schedules." (original)	Row A, worth 1 point on every essay. Restating the prompt or listing pros and cons scores 0.
Defensible	Capable of being supported with evidence and reasoning; not a statement of fact or an unprovable preference.	"The penny should be eliminated" is defensible; "The penny is a coin" is not.	Rubric language: "a thesis that presents a defensible position."
Claim of fact	Asserts that something is or is not the case; can be verified or falsified.	"Average sleep for teenagers has fallen over the past two decades."	Writing items distinguish facts (which need no defense) from claims (which do).
Claim of value	Asserts that something is good or bad, better or worse, by some standard.	"Public libraries are the most democratic institutions in a city."	The most common FRQ 3 type ("the extent to which the claim is valid").
Claim of policy	Asserts that some action should be taken.	"Cities should regulate food trucks lightly."	Synthesis prompts about "factors to consider" invite policy claims.
Evidence	Material offered in support of a claim: facts, statistics, examples, anecdotes, expert testimony, analogies, hypotheticals, textual details.	A graph of ocean temperatures; a quotation from a source.	Row B: "specific evidence" vs. "general" evidence. The rubric's word is <i>specific</i> .
Specific evidence	Evidence that names particulars (who, what, when, how much) rather than gesturing at a category.	"Source C reports that 31 percent of surveyed cities had no vendor ordinance." (original)	Row B 3–4 requires specific evidence supporting <i>all</i> claims.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Commentary	The writer's explanation of how evidence supports a claim; the "so what."	"This figure matters because it shows regulation lagging behind the market, not strangling it." (original)	Row B's second word. The Chief Reader's recurring complaint: quotation followed by paraphrase, with no commentary.
Warrant	The usually unstated assumption that connects evidence to claim (from Toulmin's model).	Evidence: teenagers who sleep more earn higher grades. Claim: schools should start later. Warrant: schools should prioritize learning outcomes.	Rarely a stem word, but questions about "the writer most likely assumes that readers ..." test warrants.
Line of reasoning	The logical sequence of claims that, together, support the thesis; each paragraph should <i>build on</i> the previous one.	Claim 1: napping improves memory. Claim 2: therefore it helps students. Claim 3: therefore schools, not just students, benefit from allowing it.	Row B 2 vs. 3: "no line of reasoning is established" is the most common ceiling. MCQ 5.A: "Which best describes the line of reasoning developed across paragraphs 2–4?"
Reasoning	The thinking that connects evidence to claims; may be inductive or deductive.	Several studies (particulars) lead to a generalization.	MCQ stems about "the writer's reasoning" and "faulty reasoning."
Induction / inductive reasoning	Reasoning from specific instances to a general conclusion.	Three cities that deregulated vendors saw more restaurants open; therefore deregulation tends to help restaurants.	MCQ: identifying the generalization a set of examples supports. Fallacy risk: hasty generalization.
Deduction / deductive reasoning	Reasoning from general premises to a specific conclusion.	All taxes on necessities are regressive; the penny-rounding charge is a tax on necessities; therefore it is regressive.	Argument essays that begin from a definition and apply it are deductive.
Syllogism	A deductive structure of major premise, minor premise, and conclusion.	All men are mortal; Socrates is a man; Socrates is mortal.	Appears in answer choices ("provides an example of a valid syllogism" vs. "a logical fallacy").
Premise	A statement assumed true as the basis for reasoning.	"Schools exist to maximize learning."	Questions about what an argument "depends on" or "assumes."
Assumption	An unstated belief the argument needs to work.	A writer arguing for later start times assumes sleep is the main cause of poor morning performance.	MCQ 1.B: "In the sentence beginning ..., the writer most likely assumes that readers ...".

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Qualifier / qualification	A word or clause that limits a claim's scope (<i>some, often, in most cases, under these conditions</i>).	"Napping <i>in moderation</i> improves alertness <i>for most adults</i> ."	CED 3.C and 4.C. Writing items: "The writer wants to qualify the claim in sentence 4 so that it is more defensible." Unqualified absolutes are a classic distractor tell.
Modifier (as a qualifying tool)	An adjective, adverb, or phrase that narrows a claim.	"Nearly all," "in urban districts," "according to one study."	3.C/4.C explicitly name modifiers as a way to qualify claims.
Concession	Acknowledging that an opposing point has merit.	"Admittedly, a later start time complicates bus schedules."	MCQ 3.C: "The writer's concession in the sentence '...' functions to ...". Token concessions never rebutted do not earn sophistication.
Counterargument	An opposing argument, which a writer may concede, rebut, or refute.	"Critics argue that naps reduce productive hours."	Writing items: "The writer wants to address a counterargument in the third paragraph." The 2025 Chief Reader discourages formulaic counterargument paragraphs; handle opposition inside the reasoning.
Rebuttal	A response that argues against a counterargument, showing why it is weaker or less relevant.	"But the hours lost to afternoon fatigue exceed the twenty minutes a nap requires."	Rubric sophistication: "exploring complexities or tensions."
Refutation	A rebuttal that shows a counterargument is actually false or unsound.	Showing that the study critics cite measured a different population.	Unit 9 skill; appears in answer choices describing paragraph function.
Alternative perspective	A different way of seeing the issue that is not necessarily opposed, used to complicate rather than refute.	"From a parent's perspective, the question is not productivity but safety."	CED 3.C/4.C name "alternative perspectives" alongside counterarguments.
Causation vs. correlation	Causation: A produces B. Correlation: A and B occur together. Confusing them is a reasoning error.	Students who nap score higher; napping may not cause the scores.	MCQ reasoning items and strong argument essays test this distinction.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Synthesis	Combining material from multiple sources with your own position to form a unified argument; putting sources "in conversation."	Using Source B's data to qualify Source A's claim.	FRQ 1's name. The 2012 Chief Reader: synthesis "involves rhetorical analysis of the arguments presented by the sources."
Source credibility and bias	The trustworthiness of a source given its author, venue, date, and interest in the outcome.	A trade-association report on its own industry.	Unit 6; MCQ on synthesis-style passages; essay sophistication when you weigh a source.
Hypothetical example	An invented but plausible scenario used as evidence.	"Imagine a student who sleeps five hours ..."	Rubric decision rules: hypotheticals work when "grounded in observations about human nature."
Expert testimony	The statement of a qualified authority offered as evidence.	A sleep researcher quoted in Source D.	Answer-choice noun: "an appeal to authority."
Statistics / quantitative evidence	Numerical evidence.	"Thirteen percent of respondents ..."	Every synthesis set includes at least one quantitative source; translate it into plain language.

Group 4: Organization and Methods of Development

CED skills 5.B/5.C and 6.B/6.C. Multiple-choice questions ask how a paragraph is organized, what a shift accomplishes, and which "method of development" a passage uses. Writing items ask you to pick transitions and reorder sentences.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Organization	The arrangement of parts (paragraphs, sections) in a text.	Chronological, then analytical.	MCQ 5.B: "The organization of the passage is best described as moving from ...".
Unity	Every part of a text serves the central claim.	A paragraph in which every sentence supports its topic sentence.	Writing items: "The writer is considering deleting sentence 8. Should the writer keep or delete it?"

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Coherence	The parts connect logically and smoothly, usually through transitions, repetition of key terms, and consistent ordering.	Each topic sentence picks up a word from the previous paragraph's last sentence.	MCQ 5.B: "how the organization creates unity and coherence."
Method of development (rhetorical mode)	A standard way of developing an idea: narration, description, exemplification, comparison–contrast, cause–effect, definition, classification, process analysis, problem–solution.	A passage on grammar "developed primarily by narration and analysis."	MCQ 5.C: "The writer develops the passage primarily through ...". Writing items 6.C: "The writer wants to develop the second paragraph using a comparison."
Narration	Telling events in sequence.	Douglass narrates his first day in New York.	Answer-choice noun; essays that work chronologically through a speech score well.
Description	Rendering sensory detail of a person, place, or thing.	Didion on the Santa Ana winds.	Pair with "imagery" in style questions.
Exemplification / illustration	Developing a claim through examples.	Three cities offered as cases of a trend.	MCQ: "The author includes the example of X primarily to ...".
Comparison and contrast	Developing an idea by showing similarities and differences.	Austen's and Dickens's marriage proposals set side by side.	"The comparison of A to B in paragraph 3 primarily emphasizes ...".
Cause and effect	Explaining why something happened or what will result.	A passage tracing how one price increase ripples through the economy.	Stem: "The writer's discussion of X in paragraph 3 is connected to the thesis by ...".
Definition	Explaining what a term means, often by distinguishing it from near-synonyms.	Defining "disobedience" as principled refusal, not mere defiance.	Chief Reader on FRQ 3: define the key abstract term before arguing.
Classification and division	Sorting a subject into categories or breaking it into parts.	Dividing literature into "knowledge" and "power."	Answer-choice noun; also an organizational pattern students can use.
Process analysis	Explaining how something is done or how it happens, step by step.	How a proof is checked by computer.	Less common; appears as a distractor.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Problem–solution	Presenting a problem, then proposing a remedy.	An op-ed that diagnoses then prescribes.	Synthesis essays organized by “the problem / what to weigh / what to do.”
Chronological order	Arranging by time.	A memoir excerpt.	Shift questions: “marks a shift from narration to analysis.”
Spatial order	Arranging by location.	Describing a city from river to hills.	Rare on AP Lang; appears in description.
Order of importance (climactic order)	Arranging items from least to most important (or the reverse).	Saving the strongest reason for last.	Garden of English’s “increasingly stronger topic sentences” is climactic order applied to essay structure.
Shift (turn)	A change in tone, subject, mode, or stance, often signaled by <i>but</i> , <i>yet</i> , <i>however</i> , a question, or a one-sentence paragraph.	Ellison’s “For our own part ...” moves from musing to direct argument.	High-frequency MCQ: “A major shift occurs at which point?” with quoted-phrase choices.
Transition	A word, phrase, or sentence that signals the relationship between ideas.	<i>Consequently; by contrast; granted; for instance.</i>	Writing items 6.B: “Which transition best clarifies the relationship between sentences 9 and 10?”
Additive transition	Signals addition (<i>furthermore, moreover, in addition</i>).	“Moreover, the costs fall on the poorest.”	Distractor when the real relationship is contrast or cause.
Adversative transition	Signals contrast or concession (<i>however, yet, admittedly, nevertheless</i>).	“Nevertheless, the plan has defenders.”	The most common correct answer on transition items because student drafts most often pivot.
Causal transition	Signals cause or result (<i>therefore, consequently, as a result</i>).	“As a result, enrollment fell.”	Distractor when the writer has not established causation.
Sequential transition	Signals order (<i>first, next, finally</i>).	“Finally, the committee voted.”	Appears in process passages.
Topic sentence	The sentence that states a paragraph’s claim.	“The second cost of the penny is time.”	Writing items: “The writer wants to add a topic sentence to the fourth paragraph that connects it to the line of reasoning.”

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Introduction	The opening that establishes context, exigence, and thesis.	A 2–4 sentence opening that names the speaker, occasion, and claim.	CED 2.A. Writing items: “add a sentence at the beginning of the first paragraph to introduce the topic and engage the audience.”
Conclusion	The closing that reinforces the thesis and often states implications or a call to action.	Ending by stating why the issue will matter in ten years.	Writing items: “a conclusion that reinforces the thesis and leaves the audience with a sense of urgency.”
Hook	An opening sentence designed to catch attention.	A startling statistic or a question.	Chief Readers warn against “hook theatrics” in rhetorical analysis; the exam prefers context.
Framing	Opening and closing with the same image, story, or idea.	Returning in the last paragraph to the grandmother introduced in the first.	Answer choices for conclusion function: “returns to the opening anecdote.”
Digression	A departure from the main line of thought.	A paragraph-long aside about etymology.	Answer-choice noun (“introduces a digression”); sometimes the shift is strategic.
Juxtaposition	Placing two things side by side to highlight contrast or connection.	A sentence about mansions next to one about tenements.	Both an organizational and a stylistic term; “the juxtaposition of X and Y serves to ...”.

Group 5: Diction

Diction means word choice. CED 7.A asks you to explain how word choice contributes to tone; 8.A asks you to choose words that convey a tone. Expect “in context, the word X most nearly means” and “the chief effect of the word X is to” on every reading set.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Diction	A writer’s choice of words, considered for their precision, level, and associations.	Choosing “hygienists” to describe grammar purists.	“The writer’s diction in paragraph 2 primarily conveys ...”. In essays, “uses diction” with no specific word is a flagged weakness.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Denotation	A word's literal dictionary meaning.	"Cheap" denotes low in price.	WIC items: "In context, 'offices' is best understood to mean ..." (duties, not buildings).
Connotation	The associations and emotional coloring a word carries beyond its denotation.	"Cheap" connotes shoddy; "inexpensive" does not.	MCQ: "the word X connotes ..."; writing items: "replace the word X with a more precise word."
Register	The level of formality and the social setting a word choice implies (formal, informal, technical, intimate).	"Commence" vs. "start" vs. "kick off."	Writing items 8.A: "maintain a formal, objective tone."
Formal diction	Elevated, precise, often Latinate vocabulary; no contractions or slang.	"The committee convened to deliberate."	Expected in student drafts on the exam; the correct revision is rarely the slangy one.
Informal / colloquial diction	Everyday, conversational language, including contractions and idioms.	"The committee got together to hash it out."	Answer choices: "colloquial," "conversational." A deliberate choice in humorous essays.
Slang	Very informal words tied to a group or moment.	"That take is mid."	Appears as a distractor revision that "clashes with the draft's tone."
Jargon	Specialized vocabulary of a profession or field.	"Stakeholder alignment," "Bayesian prior."	Sources in synthesis sets may use jargon; translate it in your essay.
Technical diction	Precise field-specific terms used correctly for an informed audience.	"Mitochondrial" in a biology passage.	Audience items: "The use of technical terms suggests the intended audience is ...".
Concrete diction	Words naming things you can perceive.	"Bobbins," "night shift," "mill floor."	Essays: concrete nouns are what produce imagery and emotional effect.
Abstract diction	Words naming ideas or qualities.	"Justice," "progress," "liberty."	MCQ: a shift "from concrete detail to abstraction." Chief Reader: define abstractions before arguing.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Latinate diction	Words derived from Latin, often polysyllabic and formal.	"Illuminate," "circumvent."	Contributes to a scholarly or distant tone.
Anglo-Saxon (Germanic) diction	Short, plain words of Old English origin.	"Light," "get around."	Contributes to a blunt or intimate tone; Lincoln's Gettysburg Address is largely Anglo-Saxon.
Euphemism	A mild or indirect word substituted for a harsh or blunt one.	"Passed away" for "died"; "downsizing" for "layoffs."	MCQ: "the euphemism in line 12 serves to ..."; satire often exposes euphemism.
Dysphemism	A harsh or offensive word substituted for a neutral one (the opposite of euphemism).	"Shack" for a small house.	Rare, but useful in analyzing invective.
Loaded (slanted) language	Words chosen for strong connotation to steer judgment.	"Regime" vs. "government."	Writing items on objective tone; also a fallacy-adjacent concept (Group 9).
Archaic diction	Words or senses no longer in common use.	"Wanting" meaning <i>lacking</i> ; "awful" meaning <i>awe-inspiring</i> .	The classic WIC trap: distractors offer the modern sense.
Idiom	An expression whose meaning is not literal.	"Fly in the face of."	WIC items sometimes ask what an idiom means in context.
Cliché	An overused expression that has lost force.	"At the end of the day."	Writing items: the clichéd revision is usually wrong.
Pejorative	A word that expresses contempt or disapproval.	"Hack," "bureaucrat."	MCQ: "Which of the following is used to mock an attitude ...?"
Honorific / laudatory diction	Words that confer praise or respect.	"Statesman," "visionary."	Tone items: "laudatory," "reverent."
Imagery	Language that appeals to the senses (visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory, gustatory, kinesthetic).	Kelley's "little girls ... carrying their pails."	Essays: name the image, then its effect. "Uses imagery" alone is flagged.
Allusion	A brief reference to a person, event, text, or myth the audience is expected to recognize.	Lincoln's "Four score and seven years ago" echoes biblical phrasing.	MCQ: "The reference to X primarily serves to ...". Footnotes in older exams glossed allusions.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Epithet	A descriptive phrase attached to a name; also, a term of abuse.	"Honest Abe"; "the Iron Lady."	Appears in analysis of praise and invective.
Vernacular	The native language or dialect of a place or group.	Twain's use of regional speech.	Pairs with "colloquial" in tone/style items.

Group 6: Syntax

Syntax means sentence structure. CED 7.B and 7.C are about clauses and mechanics; 8.B and 8.C about writing clear sentences. The modern MCQ writing sets lean heavily on "combine sentences 6 and 7" and "which punctuation change most clearly conveys the writer's meaning."

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Syntax	The arrangement of words, phrases, and clauses into sentences; sentence length, order, and type.	A string of short sentences after a long one.	"The series of short sentences at the end of the paragraph creates an effect of ...". In essays, "uses syntax" with no specific sentence is flagged.
Clause	A group of words with a subject and a verb.	"because the mills ran all night"	Foundation for 7.B items.
Independent clause	A clause that can stand alone as a sentence.	"The mills ran all night."	"Combine sentences 6 and 7" items test whether you can subordinate one idea to another.
Dependent (subordinate) clause	A clause that cannot stand alone; begins with a subordinator (<i>because, although, when, which</i>).	"Although the mills ran all night, ..."	MCQ 7.B: "The dependent clause that opens the sentence primarily serves to ..." (usually: to concede, to set a condition, to give background).
Coordination	Joining equal elements with coordinating conjunctions (<i>and, but, or, so, yet, for, nor</i>).	"The law passed, but enforcement lagged."	Compound sentences; items about relationships between ideas.
Subordination	Making one idea grammatically dependent on another to show which is more important.	"Although the law passed, enforcement lagged."	The correct "combine sentences" answer usually subordinates the less important idea.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Simple sentence	One independent clause.	"Enforcement lagged."	Effect: emphasis, bluntness, pace.
Compound sentence	Two or more independent clauses joined by a coordinator or semicolon.	"The law passed; enforcement lagged."	Effect: balance, equal weight.
Complex sentence	One independent clause plus one or more dependent clauses.	"Because the law lacked funding, enforcement lagged."	Effect: shows logical relationships (cause, condition, concession).
Compound-complex sentence	Two or more independent clauses plus at least one dependent clause.	"Because the law lacked funding, enforcement lagged, and violations rose."	Appears in questions about how a writer "shows relationships among ideas."
Periodic sentence	A sentence that withholds its main clause until the end, building suspense.	"Through hunger, through cold, through the long nights of the mill, the children worked." (original)	Answer choices: "builds to a climax," "delays the main point for emphasis."
Cumulative (loose) sentence	A sentence that states the main clause first, then adds modifying details.	"The children worked, bent over the bobbins, their fingers raw, their eyes heavy." (original)	Effect: accumulation of detail, conversational flow.
Parallelism (parallel structure)	Repetition of grammatical form across words, phrases, or clauses.	"of the people, by the people, for the people."	High-frequency; Chief Readers warn against <i>naming</i> parallelism without quoting and explaining the matched elements.
Balanced sentence	A sentence whose halves are parallel and roughly equal in length, often to compare or contrast.	"Knowledge speaks, but wisdom listens."	Answer choice: "a balanced sentence that emphasizes contrast."
Antithesis	Parallel structure used to set opposites against each other.	"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." (Dickens)	Appears in device-identification items and in essays on speeches.
Inversion (anastrophe)	Reversing normal word order for emphasis.	"Into the valley of Death / Rode the six hundred." (Tennyson)	Effect: emphasis on the displaced word; archaic or elevated tone.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Rhetorical question	A question asked for effect, not for an answer.	"Shall we expect some transatlantic military giant to step the ocean and crush us at a blow?" (Lincoln, 1838)	"The question in the final paragraph functions primarily to ..." (to prompt reflection, to imply an obvious answer, to challenge). Overuse in student essays is flagged.
Hypophora	Asking a question and immediately answering it.	"What is the remedy? It is a simple one." (original)	Answer choice for the function of a question-answer pair: "to anticipate the audience's question."
Fragment (intentional)	An incomplete sentence used deliberately for emphasis.	"Not now. Not ever."	Writing items may test whether a fragment is an error or a choice; in formal drafts it is usually treated as an error.
Repetition	Repeating a word, phrase, or structure for emphasis or rhythm.	Kelley's repeated "while we sleep."	"The writer's repetition of X in paragraph 4 serves to ...". Explain <i>what</i> is emphasized.
Anaphora	Repetition at the beginning of successive clauses or sentences.	"We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds ..." (Churchill; quoted widely)	Most commonly named scheme in essays; name it <i>and</i> say what the repeated phrase insists on.
Epistrophe	Repetition at the end of successive clauses.	"of the people, by the people, for the people."	Companion to anaphora.
Asyndeton	Omitting conjunctions between items in a series.	"I came, I saw, I conquered."	Effect: speed, urgency, piling up. Chief Readers flag "unsupported syntax claims" like asyndeton named without evidence.
Polysyndeton	Using more conjunctions than necessary.	"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew." (Matthew 7:25, KJV)	Effect: weight, accumulation, deliberateness.
Listing / catalog	A long series of items.	A sentence enumerating every chore in a day.	"The long catalog sentence in lines 54–62 creates an effect of ...".
Appositive	A noun phrase placed beside another to rename or explain it.	"Kelley, a reformer who had worked in Chicago settlement houses, spoke ..."	Writing items: "combine sentences" answers often use an appositive.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Parenthetical element	Material set off by commas, dashes, or parentheses that interrupts the sentence.	"The penny (which costs more than a cent to make) ..."	MCQ 7.C: "The parenthetical / dash in the sentence functions to ..." (to add an aside, to qualify, to inject a tone).
Modifier placement	Where a descriptive word or phrase sits relative to what it modifies; misplacement creates ambiguity.	"Covered in syrup, she ate the pancakes" vs. "She ate the pancakes covered in syrup."	Writing items 8.B/8.C: "Which version of sentence 12 most clearly conveys the writer's meaning?"
Active voice	The subject performs the action.	"The committee rejected the plan."	The default correct revision for clarity.
Passive voice	The subject receives the action; the actor may be omitted.	"The plan was rejected."	Writing items test when passive hides responsibility; also a deliberate choice to shift emphasis.
Pacing	The speed at which a text moves, controlled by sentence length and punctuation.	Short sentences accelerate; long ones slow.	Answer choices: "quickens the pace," "slows the reader."
Colon (for effect)	Introduces an explanation, list, or dramatic completion.	"There was one problem: money."	7.C items on punctuation and clarity.
Semicolon (for effect)	Links closely related independent clauses, implying balance or connection.	"The law passed; the children stayed in the mills."	Punctuation items; the semicolon often marks a pointed contrast.
Dash (for effect)	Marks an interruption, an aside, or an emphatic addition.	"The vote was close — closer than anyone predicted."	"The dash in line 8 functions to ..." (to add emphasis, to insert commentary).
Ellipsis (punctuation)	Three spaced periods marking omitted words or a trailing thought.	"The children ... well, you have seen them."	In essays, use ellipses to shorten quotations honestly.
Antecedent	The noun a pronoun refers to.	In "Kelley spoke and <i>she</i> was heard," <i>Kelley</i> is the antecedent of <i>she</i> .	Pre-2019 "the antecedent of <i>it</i> " items are gone, but clarity items about ambiguous pronouns remain in writing sets.
Zeugma	One word (usually a verb) governing two or more others in different senses.	"She broke his car and his heart."	Rare; a device-identification distractor.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Expletive (grammatical)	A filler word like “there” or “it” that delays the subject.	“There are many reasons to doubt this.”	Writing items: revising expletive openings for concision.

Group 7: Figurative Language, Schemes, and Tropes

A **trope** changes a word’s meaning (metaphor, irony); a **scheme** changes the arrangement of words (anaphora, chiasmus). Several schemes are in Group 6 because they are syntactic. Remember the Chief Reader’s rule: identifying a figure earns nothing; explaining what it makes the audience see, feel, or accept earns Row B points.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Figurative language	Language not meant literally; comparisons, exaggerations, and substitutions that create meaning.	“The mill was a hungry mouth.”	Umbrella term in stems: “the figurative language in paragraph 3 primarily emphasizes ...”.
Metaphor	A direct comparison stating one thing <i>is</i> another.	“All the world’s a stage.” (Shakespeare)	“The comparison of A to B in paragraph 3 primarily emphasizes ...”. Explain what qualities transfer.
Simile	A comparison using <i>like</i> or <i>as</i> .	“My love is like a red, red rose.” (Burns)	Same stems as metaphor; distractors confuse the two.
Extended metaphor	A metaphor developed across several sentences or a whole passage.	De Quincey’s horticultural imagery of truth as a seed planted and transplanted.	MCQ: “all of the following words contribute to the same metaphor EXCEPT.”
Analogy	An extended comparison between two things to explain or argue, often point by point.	Comparing a proof to a Beethoven symphony to explain mathematical beauty.	High-frequency answer choice: “an extended analogy.” Fallacy risk: false analogy (Group 9).
Conceit	An elaborate, surprising extended metaphor.	Donne comparing two lovers to a compass.	Mostly AP Lit; appears in older Lang passages.
Personification	Giving human qualities to nonhuman things.	“Death, be not proud.” (Donne)	Device-identification items; explain the emotional effect.
Anthropomorphism	Treating animals or objects as fully human in behavior.	Animals that hold town meetings.	Appears in satire and fable; distinguish from personification.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Hyperbole	Deliberate exaggeration for effect.	"I've told you a million times."	Tone items: "hyperbolic," "exaggerated." Central to satire.
Understatement	Deliberately saying less than the truth.	Calling a hurricane "a bit of weather."	Tone items: "understated." Hogue's Crash Course and the 2001 exam both treat it as a key device.
Litotes (LY-tuh-teez)	Understatement by negating the opposite.	"Not bad" for <i>excellent</i> ; "no small feat."	Rare stem word; a form of understatement.
Metonymy (meh-TON-uh-mee)	Substituting a related thing for the thing meant.	"The White House announced"; "the pen is mightier than the sword."	Device-identification items; distinguish from synecdoche.
Synecdoche (sin-EK-duh-kee)	Substituting a part for the whole or whole for part.	"All hands on deck"; "wheels" for a car.	Often paired with metonymy in answer choices.
Paradox	A statement that seems contradictory but reveals a truth.	"The child is father of the man." (Wordsworth)	Sophistication: "explaining the function of the passage's complexities or tensions."
Oxymoron	Two contradictory terms placed together.	"Deafening silence"; "bittersweet."	EXCEPT items: "the sentence includes all of the following EXCEPT an oxymoron."
Symbol	A concrete thing that stands for an abstract idea.	A flag for a nation.	"The reference to X most likely suggests ...".
Allegory	A narrative whose characters and events stand for abstract ideas throughout.	Plato's cave.	Rare on Lang; appears in satire analysis.
Apostrophe	Addressing an absent person, an abstraction, or an object directly.	"O Captain! my Captain!" (Whitman)	Device-identification distractor; appears in speeches that address the dead.
Chiasmus (ky-AZ-mus)	Reversing the grammatical order of two parallel phrases (A-B, B-A).	"Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." (Kennedy, widely quoted)	Device items; in essays explain how the reversal reframes the idea.
Antimetabole	Chiasmus that repeats the same words in reverse order.	"Fair is foul, and foul is fair." (Shakespeare)	A subtype; "chiasmus" is accepted on the exam.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Alliteration	Repetition of initial consonant sounds.	"Peter Piper picked ..."	EXCEPT items listing sound devices; effect is emphasis or memorability.
Assonance	Repetition of vowel sounds.	"The rain in Spain ..."	Rare on Lang.
Onomatopoeia	Words that imitate sounds.	"Buzz," "clang."	Appears in EXCEPT lists.
Pun	A play on a word's multiple meanings or similar sounds.	"A good pun is its own reword."	Tone items: "playful," "witty."
Aphorism	A concise, memorable statement of a general truth.	"Early to bed and early to rise ..." (Franklin)	Argument essays quoting a maxim; also the form of most FRQ 3 stimuli.
Epigram	A short, witty, often paradoxical statement.	"I can resist everything except temptation." (Wilde)	Tone items: "epigrammatic."
Maxim	A rule of conduct stated briefly.	"Never be limited by other people's limited imaginations." (Jemison, the 2026 FRQ 3 stimulus)	FRQ 3 prompts since 2021 are built on a maxim from a public figure.
Motif	A recurring image, word, or idea across a text.	Repeated references to light in a speech about hope.	"The repeated references to X serve to ...".
Synesthesia	Describing one sense in terms of another.	"A loud color."	Rare; description passages.
Rhetorical (figurative) comparison	The CED's umbrella term for metaphor, simile, and analogy; skill 7.A asks how "comparisons" contribute to tone.	Any of the above.	Stem word: "the comparison in line 12 primarily ...". Unit 8: comparisons an audience can understand.

Group 8: Satire and Irony

Irony and satire appear in roughly one MCQ reading passage per exam (the 2001 Ellison passage and the 2009 E. O. Wilson FRQ are models). Crash Course's advice holds: on an irony question, the correct answer will itself sound ironic. In essays, identify the **target**, the **technique**, and what the satirist **wants the audience to see or do**.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Irony	A gap between what is said and what is meant, or between what is expected and what happens.	Calling a flooded basement "a lovely surprise."	Tone items: "ironic," "wry." Essays must explain what the irony exposes.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Verbal irony	Saying the opposite of what is meant.	"What fine weather" during a storm.	The most common form on the exam; distinguish from sarcasm (which is verbal irony meant to wound).
Situational irony	An outcome contrary to expectation.	A fire station burns down.	Appears in narrative passages and argument evidence.
Dramatic irony	The audience knows something a character or speaker does not.	A persona who does not realize how monstrous his "modest proposal" is.	Satire passages; the persona is the vehicle.
Socratic irony	Feigning ignorance to expose another's error.	Asking "innocent" questions that trap the opponent.	Rare; appears in dialogue-based passages.
Sarcasm	Cutting verbal irony intended to mock or wound.	"Brilliant plan, truly."	Tone items: "sarcastic," "caustic." Distinguish from gentler "wry" or "ironic."
Satire	Writing that ridicules human folly or vice, usually to provoke reform.	Swift's "A Modest Proposal" (1729) proposes eating Irish infants to expose English indifference.	FRQ 2 occasionally features satire (2005 <i>Onion</i> , 2009 Wilson); essays must identify the real target.
Horatian satire	Gentle, amused satire that teases.	Twain's "Advice to Youth."	Tone items: "gently mocking," "playful."
Juvenalian satire	Harsh, bitter satire that attacks.	Swift at his most savage.	Tone items: "scathing," "bitter," "contemptuous."
Parody	Imitating a style or form to mock it or its subject.	A fake press release that mimics marketing jargon.	The 2005 <i>Onion</i> passage; "the passage parodies ...".
Burlesque	Treating a serious subject trivially or a trivial subject grandly.	A mock-epic about a card game.	Rare stem word; "mock-heroic" is the related tone.
Mock-epic / mock-heroic	Applying grand epic conventions to a trivial subject.	Pope's <i>The Rape of the Lock</i> .	Tone items: "mock-serious," "mock solemnity."
Caricature	Exaggerating a person's traits for comic or critical effect.	A cartoon politician with an enormous mouth.	Visual sources in synthesis sets (editorial cartoons).
Invective	Harsh, abusive language directed at a target.	A diatribe against "hacks and bureaucrats."	Tone items: "vituperative," "scornful."
Lampoon	A sharp, often personal satirical attack.	A column ridiculing a specific official.	Rare stem word.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Incongruity	Placing unlike things together for comic or critical effect.	A philosophical essay about a jazz nickname written in scholarly prose.	The engine of mock-scholarly tone (Ellison).
Reversal	Inverting normal order or expectation.	Children lecturing parents on responsibility.	Satire technique; also situational irony.
Wit	Quick, clever, often verbal intelligence.	An epigram.	Tone items: "witty," "urbane."
Tongue-in-cheek	Said with insincere seriousness; playfully ironic.	A deadpan "endorsement" of a terrible idea.	Tone items; the answer "sounds ironic."
Deadpan	Delivering absurd content with a straight face.	Swift's calm arithmetic about infants.	Describes the persona's tone in satire.
Innuendo	An indirect, often disparaging suggestion.	"He has an interesting relationship with the truth."	Tone items: "insinuating."
Double entendre	A phrase with two meanings, one often risqué.	Many Shakespearean puns.	Rare on Lang.
Self-deprecation	Humor directed at oneself, often to build ethos.	A speaker joking about her own failures before advising graduates.	Tone items: "self-deprecating"; sophistication when you explain how it disarms the audience.

Group 9: Logical Fallacies

Fallacies appear in two places on the exam: (1) MCQ items that ask what is wrong with a writer's reasoning or ask you to pick the revision that avoids faulty logic, and (2) FRQ 3 essays, where naming a fallacy in the opposing view (and avoiding it in your own) is a mark of control. Twenty-two are listed here; the first sixteen are the ones named in the CED-aligned vocabulary lists, and the rest are common in Crash Course and teacher lists.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE (ALL ORIGINAL)	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Ad hominem	Attacking the person instead of the argument.	"You can't trust her plan for the budget; she's been divorced twice."	MCQ: "The writer's response to critics in paragraph 4 is weakened by ...". Avoid in FRQ 3.
Straw man	Misrepresenting an opposing view to make it easier to attack.	"Opponents of the new stadium want our city to have no entertainment at all."	Chief Readers flag "counterargument strawmen." Writing items: pick the sentence that "fairly represents" the opposing view.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE (ALL ORIGINAL)	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
False dilemma (either/or)	Presenting only two options when more exist.	"Either we ban phones in school or we accept failing grades."	The 2025 Chief Reader warns against "binary framing" in FRQ 3. Distractor tell: <i>only, must, either</i> .
Slippery slope	Claiming one step will inevitably lead to extreme consequences without showing the chain.	"If we allow one food truck, downtown restaurants will all close within a year."	MCQ reasoning items: "the writer's claim in sentence 9 is unsupported because ...".
Hasty generalization	Drawing a broad conclusion from too few cases.	"My two cousins hated college, so college is a waste."	The most common evidence flaw in student essays; "overgeneralization" in answer choices.
Post hoc ergo propter hoc	Assuming that because B followed A, A caused B.	"The library opened in March; crime fell in April; the library reduced crime."	Causation vs. correlation items; strong essays flag it in sources.
Begging the question / circular reasoning	Using the conclusion as a premise.	"Napping is beneficial because it helps people."	Writing items: a revision that merely restates the claim is not evidence.
Appeal to (false) authority	Citing someone outside their expertise, or citing authority instead of evidence.	"A famous actor says this diet works, so it must."	Source-credibility items in synthesis-style passages.
Bandwagon (ad populum)	Arguing something is true or right because many people believe or do it.	"Everyone is switching to this app, so it must be the best."	Distractor tell: "widely accepted," "most people agree."
Red herring	Introducing an irrelevant point to distract.	"Why worry about the penny when the national debt is so large?"	MCQ: "sentence 11 should be deleted because it ..." (distracts from the line of reasoning).
Non sequitur	A conclusion that does not follow from the premises.	"She is a talented athlete, so she will be a good mayor."	Answer choice: "the conclusion does not follow from the evidence."
Equivocation	Shifting the meaning of a key term mid-argument.	Using "free" to mean both "no cost" and "unrestricted."	Chief Reader: "conflating adjacent concepts" (photo albums vs. selfies). Define your terms.
Appeal to fear	Using fear rather than evidence to persuade.	"Without this law, no child will be safe."	Propaganda-analysis units; tone items: "alarmist."

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE (ALL ORIGINAL)	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Appeal to pity	Using sympathy in place of relevant evidence.	"You should pass me because I worked so hard."	Distinguish legitimate pathos from substitution for reasoning.
Tu quoque ("you too")	Deflecting criticism by accusing the critic of the same fault.	"You say I'm late, but you were late last week."	A form of ad hominem; appears in dialogue passages.
False analogy	Comparing two things that are not alike in the relevant respects.	"Running a country is just like running a business."	MCQ: "the analogy in lines 34–37 is weakened by ...". Essays: test analogies before using them.
Loaded language	Using emotionally charged words to bypass reasoning.	"Bureaucrats are strangling small business."	Writing items on objective tone; related to slanted diction (Group 5).
Appeal to tradition	Arguing something is right because it has always been done.	"We've always used pennies."	Appears in synthesis sources (e.g., preservation, handwriting).
Appeal to novelty	Arguing something is better because it is new.	"The new curriculum must be superior; it's cutting-edge."	The mirror of appeal to tradition.
Genetic fallacy	Judging a claim by its origin rather than its merits.	"That idea came from a tabloid, so it's false."	Source-evaluation items; distinguish from legitimate credibility checks.
Composition / division	Assuming what is true of parts is true of the whole (composition) or vice versa (division).	"Each player is excellent, so the team must be."	Rare but appears in reasoning items.
No true Scotsman (moving the goalposts)	Redefining a category to exclude counterexamples.	"No real student would skip reading."	Related to equivocation; a sophistication observation in FRQ 3.

Group 10: Genre and Task Vocabulary

The orienting paragraph of every FRQ 2 and the italicized note on every MCQ passage names a **genre**. Knowing the conventions of each genre tells you what choices to expect and what audience is implied. The second half of this group decodes the verbs in the prompts themselves.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Speech	A text composed to be delivered aloud to a present audience; expect direct address, repetition, and attention to occasion.	Kelley (1905), Kennedy (1962), Obama (2013).	The most common FRQ 2 genre. Write “speaker” and “listeners,” name the occasion, and attend to how the speech sounds.
Commencement address	A speech to graduates; conventions include advice, personal story, humor, and a charge to the future.	Albright (1997), Dove (2016).	FRQ 2 2018, 2023. The audience is young, hopeful, and restless; good essays note this.
Eulogy	A speech honoring someone who has died; conventions include praise, personal memory, and a claim about legacy.	Thatcher on Reagan (2004); Obama on Rosa Parks’s statue (2021).	FRQ 2 2016, 2021. Restraint and reverence are the expected tones.
Tribute	A speech or essay honoring a living or dead person’s achievements.	Wendell Phillips on Toussaint L’Ouverture (1861).	Pairs with eulogy; expect praise, comparison, and elevation.
Acceptance speech	A speech given on receiving an award; conventions include gratitude, humility, and reflection on the craft or cause.	Schlitz’s Newbery acceptance (2008, the 2026 FRQ 2).	Expect self-deprecation and a turn toward the audience’s values.
Open letter	A letter addressed to one person but published for a wider readership.	Gandhi to Lord Irwin (1930); Banneker to Jefferson (1791).	FRQ 2 2010, 2019. Analyze both the named recipient and the public audience.
Letter (private)	Correspondence to a specific person; conventions include intimacy and shared history.	Abigail Adams to her son (1780); Samuel Johnson’s denial of patronage (1762).	FRQ 2 2014, 2011 Set B. Note how the relationship shapes tone.
Op-ed / editorial	A short persuasive essay in a newspaper (op-ed is signed and opinion; editorial speaks for the paper).	Vasquez Gilliland in the <i>New York Times</i> (2023).	FRQ 2 2025 Set 2; common in synthesis sources and MCQ writing passages. 300–800 words, clear claim, general audience.
Essay	A short prose composition exploring an idea, often personal in voice.	Hazlitt, “On the Want of Money” (1827).	The default MCQ reading genre.
Memoir	A first-person account of part of the author’s life, selected and shaped for meaning.	Simu Liu (2024); Treuer’s introduction to <i>Rez Life</i> (2025).	FRQ 2 2024 Set 2, 2013, 2025 Set 1. Analyze how personal narrative serves an argument.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Autobiography / narrative	A fuller first-person life story.	Douglass's <i>Narrative</i> (1845).	MCQ passages; expect reflection on the past self.
Manifesto	A public declaration of principles and intentions.	Stanton's "Declaration of Sentiments" (1848).	Expect parallel structure, absolute claims, and a call to action.
Press release / press conference remarks	An official statement to the news media.	Kennedy on steel prices (1962).	FRQ 2 2012. The "audience" is both reporters and the public they will inform.
Lecture	A prepared academic talk.	Sotomayor at Berkeley (2001).	FRQ 2 2022 Set 1. Expect reasoned structure and acknowledgment of complexity.
Scientific / historical prose	Nonfiction that explains findings or events to an informed general audience.	Barry, <i>The Great Influenza</i> (2004).	FRQ 2 2008; MCQ reading sets. Analyze how the writer characterizes the subject.
Journalism / reportage	Reporting of events for a general audience; expects balance and sourcing.	A newspaper report of a study in a synthesis set.	Source-credibility judgments in synthesis.
Satire / parody (as genre)	See Group 8.	<i>The Onion</i> (2005).	FRQ 2 occasionally; MCQ roughly one passage per exam.
Student draft (writing passage)	The MCQ writing stimulus: an argumentative draft with numbered sentences written in an academic register.	A five-paragraph draft on urban rewilding.	20–22 of the 45 MCQ items. Read the stem first, then the numbered sentences it names.
Orienting information	The italicized note before a passage giving author, date, genre, occasion, and audience.	"The following is excerpted from a 2016 commencement address ..."	Always read it twice; it supplies the rhetorical situation that FRQ 2's thesis must use.
Stimulus	The short text that prompts FRQ 3 (a quotation and its provenance).	Two sentences introducing Mae Jemison and her claim.	Read for the exact claim; "ignoring part of the prompt" is a top pitfall.
Synthesize	Combine material from several sources with your own position to form a coherent argument.	Using Sources A, C, and E to support and qualify a claim.	FRQ 1 task verb. Requires at least three sources for Row B 2+.
Analyze	Explain how parts work together to produce an effect or purpose.	Showing how an anecdote sets up a later statistic.	FRQ 2 task verb; the CED's "application" standard.

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	HOW IT APPEARS ON THE EXAM
Argue your position	State a defensible claim and support it with reasoning and evidence.	FRQ 3's uniform task since 2019.	Not "agree or disagree": "argue your position on the extent to which."
Extent to which	A prompt phrase inviting a qualified answer (how far, under what conditions, with what exceptions).	"the extent to which Osaka's claim about being present is valid."	FRQ 3 since 2019. The phrase invites nuance; "completely valid" is weak.
Qualify	To limit a claim, agreeing in part and specifying conditions.	"Powell's rule holds for reversible decisions but not irreversible ones."	Pre-2019 "defend, challenge, or qualify"; still the strongest FRQ 3 move.
Defend / challenge	To support or oppose a given claim.	Pre-2019 prompt verbs.	Historical; useful for practicing with older prompts.
Position	The stance an essay takes.	"I argue that preservation laws are valuable chiefly as a check on speculation."	Rubric: "a defensible position."
Develop	To extend an idea with evidence and commentary.	Developing a claim across two paragraphs.	Rubric Row B: "develop" vs. "restate."
Line-referenced	A stem or answer choice that cites specific lines or sentences.	"In sentence 9 (reproduced below) ..."	About two-thirds of MCQ stems; always reread the cited lines.

Appendix A: Terms Most Often Confused

PAIR	THE DISTINCTION IN ONE SENTENCE
Exigence vs. occasion	Exigence is the <i>problem</i> that demands a response; occasion is the <i>event</i> at which the response is delivered.
Purpose vs. message	Purpose is what the writer wants the audience to do or feel; message is the idea the text conveys.
Rhetorical choice vs. rhetorical device	A device is a named technique; a choice is any deliberate decision, named or described. The exam asks about choices.
Ethos/pathos/logos vs. choices	The appeals are <i>effects</i> ; anecdotes, statistics, and word choices are the <i>choices</i> that produce them.
Claim vs. thesis	A thesis is the governing claim; body paragraphs make supporting claims.

PAIR	THE DISTINCTION IN ONE SENTENCE
Concession vs. rebuttal vs. refutation	Concession grants a point; rebuttal argues against it; refutation disproves it.
Metaphor vs. analogy	A metaphor asserts identity in a phrase; an analogy extends a comparison to explain or argue.
Metonymy vs. synecdoche	Metonymy substitutes an associated thing; synecdoche substitutes a part or whole.
Verbal irony vs. sarcasm	Sarcasm is verbal irony intended to wound.
Satire vs. parody	Satire ridicules folly to reform it; parody imitates a form to mock it (and may serve satire).
Periodic vs. cumulative sentence	Periodic delays the main clause; cumulative states it first and adds detail.
Anaphora vs. epistrophe	Anaphora repeats at the start of clauses; epistrophe repeats at the end.
Asyndeton vs. polysyndeton	Asyndeton omits conjunctions; polysyndeton multiplies them.
Denotation vs. connotation	Denotation is dictionary meaning; connotation is association.
Causation vs. correlation	Causation produces; correlation accompanies.
Straw man vs. ad hominem	Straw man distorts the argument; ad hominem attacks the arguer.

Appendix B: The 25 Terms That Matter Most on Exam Day

If you can only review one list the night before, review these. Each appears either in the rubric language, in a majority of MCQ sets, or in the Chief Reader Reports.

TERM	WHY IT MATTERS
Exigence	Names the “why now”; FRQ 2 introductions should name it.
Audience	Every FRQ 2 and most 1.B items; always name the audience specifically.
Purpose	Stated in every FRQ 2 prompt; your thesis must connect choices to it.
Rhetorical choice	The unit of analysis in FRQ 2.
Thesis (defensible)	Row A on all three essays.
Claim	Body paragraphs are built on claims.
Specific evidence	Row B’s threshold word.

TERM	WHY IT MATTERS
Commentary	Row B's other threshold word; the difference between a 2 and a 4.
Line of reasoning	The most-cited discriminator in Chief Reader Reports.
Qualify / qualifier	FRQ 3's "extent to which" and MCQ 3.C/4.C items.
Concession / counterargument	Sophistication and 3.C/4.C.
Synthesis	FRQ 1's task; sources "in conversation."
Method of development	5.C/6.C items.
Transition	6.B items; the writing set's staple.
Shift	The most common organization stem.
Diction / connotation	7.A; "in context, the word ... most nearly means."
Tone	Every reading set has at least one tone item.
Syntax (clause relationships)	7.B; "combine sentences" items.
Parallelism	The most-named scheme in essays; name <i>and</i> quote.
Anecdote	The most common answer-choice noun for a rhetorical choice.
Analogy	High-frequency answer choice; also a fallacy risk.
Irony	One passage per exam; the answer "sounds ironic."
Hasty generalization	The most common student reasoning flaw.
False dilemma	The 2025 Chief Reader's "binary framing" warning.
Orienting information	Where the rhetorical situation is handed to you.

Practice: Apply the Glossary

Use these ten short items to check that you can apply terms, not just define them. Each uses an original or public domain example. Answers are in the Answer Key.

1. A speaker opens a eulogy: "He would have laughed at all of us gathered here in our dark suits." Which term best describes the *choice*, and which term describes its likely *effect*?
2. "The committee's decision, which took eleven months and cost two million dollars, was to form another committee." Name the figure of speech created by the sentence's structure and the attitude it conveys.
3. A student draft reads: "Most people agree that homework is pointless, so schools should eliminate it." Name the fallacy.

4. "Through the smoke, past the shouting crowd, over the broken glass, the firefighters carried the child." Periodic or cumulative?
5. In an 1848 essay, a writer says a cookbook belongs to the "literature of knowledge." In context, "knowledge" is being used to mean what, and which glossary term describes the writer's technique of dividing literature into two kinds?
6. "Granted, a later start time strains bus schedules. Yet the cost of an exhausted student body is larger." Name the two moves in order.
7. An orienting note says: "The following is from a 2023 op-ed in a national newspaper." Which audience assumptions follow from the genre?
8. "The pen is mightier than the sword." Metonymy or synecdoche?
9. "If we let students use calculators, soon they will not be able to count their own change, and eventually no one will understand arithmetic at all." Name the fallacy.
10. A student thesis: "Kelley uses ethos, pathos, and logos to convey her message." Why does this earn Row A but set up a weak essay, in the Chief Reader's terms?

Answer Key

1. The choice is **self-deprecating humor** (or an **anecdote**/imagined reaction) that opens a eulogy with the dead man's own voice; its effect is **pathos** mixed with **ethos**: it both honors him and builds the speaker's credibility as someone who knew him well. Note that "pathos" alone is not the choice.
2. The sentence is an **anticlimax** produced by a **periodic** structure (details withheld before the deflating main clause); the attitude is **ironic** or **sardonic** (the structure makes the committee look absurd without stating that it is).
3. **Bandwagon (ad populum)**: popularity substitutes for evidence. It also contains a **hasty generalization** ("most people agree") offered without support.
4. **Periodic**: the main clause ("the firefighters carried the child") is withheld until the end.
5. "Knowledge" is used to mean *information* or *facts* (as opposed to the imaginative power of literature); the technique is **classification and division** (dividing literature into knowledge and power). This models the 2001 De Quincey passage.
6. **Concession** ("Granted ..."), then **rebuttal** ("Yet the cost ... is larger"). The adversative transition "Yet" signals the turn.
7. An op-ed implies a **general, educated, newspaper-reading audience** with limited time, so expect a clear claim early, accessible examples, and a civic frame; it is **signed opinion**, so the writer's **persona** and **credibility** matter.
8. **Metonymy**: the pen and sword are associated with writing and warfare, not parts of them.
9. **Slippery slope**: a chain of ever-worse consequences asserted without evidence for each link.

10. It earns Row A because it is technically a claim about rhetorical choices, but the appeals are **effects, not choices**. The Chief Reader Reports (2023, 2025) state that labeling ethos, pathos, or logos as the choice, rather than as the effect of a concrete choice like an anecdote or a statistic, keeps essays at Row B 1–2 because there is nothing specific to analyze. A stronger thesis names the choices: “Kelley juxtaposes images of sleeping adults with laboring children and repeats ‘while we sleep’ to make her audience feel complicit, then redirects that guilt toward the ballot.”

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